

**Amendments to the Claims:**

Please amend the claims as follows. The present listing of claims replaces all previous claims listings in the present application.

Claim 1. (Cancelled)

Claim 2. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim ~~[[1]]~~ 4, wherein the ~~franking request receipt module~~, franking generation module, and frank transmission module are co-located at a franking server.

Claim 3. (Cancelled)

Claim 4. (Currently Amended) A ~~[[the]] computer system of claim 3, wherein for~~ generating a frank, comprising:

a franking request receipt module, operative to receive a request for at least one frank; wherein the request associates at least one franking criterion indicative of the relative importance as specified by a user, with regard to a given communication;

wherein the franking request receipt module further comprises a ~~[[the]]~~ communication receipt module operative to receive a communication and is further operative to determine whether the communication is franked or unfranked;

a franking generation module, operatively connected to the franking request receipt module, operative to generate a frank in response to the request for at least one frank and operatively connected to the franking request receipt module;

a franking attachment module operative to attach a generated frank to a received communication, the franking attachment module operatively connected to the communication receipt module and franking generation module;

a frank transmission module, operatively connected to the franking generation module, operative to transmit a generated frank, the frank transmission module operatively connected to the franking generation module;

whereupon transmission of the generated frank the frank is substantially contemporaneously attached to a communication or saved in a database for latter attachment to a communication; and

~~the computer system further comprising~~

a verification module operative to verify the authenticity of a frank affixed to a franked communication, the verification module operatively connected to the communication receipt module and further operative to receive the communication from the communication receipt module.

Claim 5. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 4, further comprising:

a sender module, operatively connected to the franking request receipt module, the sender module comprising:

a franking generation request module, the franking generation request module operative to generate the request for at least one frank; and

a franking request transmission module operative to transmit the request for at least one frank and operatively connected to the franking generation request module.

Claim 6. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 5, further comprising:

a frank receipt module, operatively connected to the franking transmission module, operative to receive the generated frank from the frank transmission module;

a database for storing the generated frank, the database operatively connected to the frank receipt module; and

a frank attachment module operative to attach the generated frank to the communication, the frank attachment module operatively connected to the database.

Claims 7-8. (Cancelled)

Claim 9. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim ~~[[7]]~~ 4, further comprising ~~a frank receipt module operative, operatively connected to the frank generation module, to receive the frank requested by the frank request module and generated by the frank generation module; and~~

a frank storage module, operatively connected to at least one of the frank receipt module, franking generation module and the franking attachment module, and operative to store the frank requested by the frank franking request receipt module.

Claim 10. (Cancelled)

Claim 11. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim ~~[[7]]~~ 4, further comprising a sender system on which at least one of the frank franking request receipt module, franking generation module, frank franking attachment module, frank and franking transmission module, and franked receipt module reside.

Claim 12. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim ~~[[11]]~~ 4, further comprising a network node on which the frank franking attachment module, frank franking transmission module, and frank franking generation module reside.

Claim 13. (Currently Amended) The [[A]] computer system of claim 4, wherein the communication receipt module further comprises: for receiving and processing a franked communication, comprising:

~~a communication receipt module operative to receive a communication;~~  
~~wherein the communication is associated with at least one franking criterion specified by a sender;~~

~~a determination module operative to determine whether the communication is franked, the determination module operatively connected to the communication receipt module; and~~

~~a franked communication processing module operative to process the communication according to a first rule in the event the communication is franked, the franked communication processing module operatively connected to the determination module.~~

Claim 14. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 13, further comprising a non-franked communication processing module, operatively connected to the communication receipt module, operative to process the communication according to a second rule in the event the communication is not franked, ~~the non-franked communication processing module operatively connected to the determination module.~~

Claim 15. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 14, further comprising a display module, operatively connected to at least one of the franked communication process module and the non-franked communication process module, operative to display the communication in a first state dictated by the first rule.

Claim 16. (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 15, wherein the display module is further operative to display the communication in a second state dictated by the second rule.

Claim 17. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 14, wherein the communication receipt module, ~~determination module~~, franked communication processing module, and non-franked communication processing module are incorporated into an electronic mail application.

Claim 18. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 14, wherein the communication receipt module, ~~determination module~~, franked communication processing module, and non-franked communication processing module are co-located at a network node associated with an Internet service provider.

Claim 19. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 14, wherein the communication receipt module, ~~determination module~~, franked communication processing module, and non-franked communication processing module are co-located at a recipient system.

Claim 20. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 14, wherein the communication receipt module, ~~determination module~~, franked communication processing module, and non-franked communication processing module are co-located at a mail server.